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- 1. Conner et al. (1983) PNAS 80: 278-282.
- 2. Rollini et al. PNAS (1985 Nov) 82(12): 7197-7201.
- 3. Gorski et al. IMMUNOGENTICS (1987) 25(6):379-402.
- 4.. de Preval et al. IMMUNOGEENTICS (1987) 26(4-5): 249-257.
- 5. Irle et al. J. EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE (1988 Mar 1) 167(3): 853-872.
- 6. Andersson et al. IMMUNOGENETICS (1988) 28 (1): 1-5.

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Linkage map of three HLA-DR β -chain genes: Evidence for a recent duplication event

(class II antigens/HLA-DR pseudogene/genetic complexity/haplotype comparison)

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The predominant class II, or Ia, antigen of the human major histocompatibility complex is HLA-DR. It consists of an α and a β chain, the latter being responsible for the remarkable polymorphism of these Ia antigens. Studies with cloned genes had shown the existence of more than one DR β-chain locus. We have isolated about 100 kilobases of the HLA-DR β-chain gene region from a cosmid library generated from a consanguineous homozygous B-cell line of the DR3 haplotype. Three HLA-DR β -chain genes have been characterized. They are arranged in a head-to-tail orientation. One of the genes lacks the region encoding the first domain of the DR β chain. The two other genes are transcribed, as shown by RNA blot hybridization analysis. A striking restriction site homology has been found within the DR β -chain gene cluster, suggesting a recent duplication event involving at least 25 kilobases of DNA. Moreover, the molecular map of $DR \beta$ chain genes cloned from B-cell lines of two other HLA-DR haplotypes shows extensive homology between alleles of a given $DR \beta$ -chain locus.

The class II antigens of the major histocompatibility complex are highly polymorphic transmembrane glycoproteins, consisting of an α subunit and a β subunit. These molecules are located predominantly on the surface of macrophages and B cells. They play a key role in the control of the immune response, functioning in cell-cell interactions and antigen presentation to regulatory T lymphocytes. In the human major histocompatibility complex (HLA), the class II molecules have been mapped to the HLA-D region on chromosome 6. Three subregions have been defined, DP, DQ, and DR. The HLA-DR antigen is the predominant surface product and it is the β chain that is responsible for the DR polymorphism (for reviews, see refs. 1 and 2).

The molecular organization of the HLA-D region has not yet been elucidated. The restriction map of the DP subregion is known. There are two DP α - and β -chain loci (3) found as α - β pairs with the α and β chain genes in a head-to-head orientation (4-6). The organization of the DQ and DR subregions is not known, although the genetic complexity of these subregions has been documented. There are two DQ α loci (7, 8) and two DQ β loci (9, 10). The HLA-DR subregion has been shown to contain only one nonpolymorphic α -chain gene (11, 12). Analysis of cDNA clones (13, 14) and genomic clones (10), as well as direct studies of cellular DNA by Southern blot hybridization (15), has allowed us to establish the existence of multiple DR β -chain loci.

In this study, we report the characterization of overlapping cosmid clones containing DR β -chain genes isolated from a genomic library prepared from DNA of a HLA-homozygous individual. Three DR β -chain genes in a head-to-tail conformation have been aligned. Two of these genes are transcribed, while the third one appears to be truncated, lacking

the first domain. Extensive restriction site homology between DR β -chain genes within the same haplotype has been observed, suggesting a recent duplication event. In addition, we observe a striking structural homology between this DR β -chain gene region and that of two other related haplotypes. The possible evolutionary implications of these observations are discussed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Construction of the Genomic Libraries. Details will be published elsewhere. Briefly, DNA from the consanguineous homozygous cell line AVL (DR3,3; kindly provided by M. Giphart) was partially digested with Sau3AI and fractionated on sucrose gradients. Fractions containing DNA fragments 30-45 kilobases (kb) long were collected and ligated with arms of cosmid pTCF (16). The ligation mixture was packaged in vitro (17) and transfected into Escherichia coli 490 A. Cosmids were spread, replicated (18), and screened by colony filter hybridization (19), using conditions described by Steinmetz et al. (20). Clones hybridizing to the specific probes after three rounds of screening were grown and their DNA was prepared. As screening probes, two DNA fragments free of repetitive sequences were isolated from a DR-\beta-chain genomic clone (unpublished data). The DRw6,6 cosmid and DR4,w6 phage genomic libraries have already been described (3, 10). The clones from the heterozygous phage library that correspond to the DRw6 haplotype were identified by Southern blot hybridization (21).

Restriction Enzyme Mapping. Cosmids were mapped by standard single and double digestions with restriction endonucleases followed by Southern blot hybridization using specific cDNA or genomic probes.

Hybridizations. Southern blot analysis (22) was as described (15). Dot hybridizations were performed as described (13). Filters were washed several times at 65°C in 2× standard saline citrate (NaCl/Cit; 1× NaCl/Cit is 150 mM NaCl/15 mM sodium citrate, pH 7.0) before a series of 30-min washes at 65°C at the indicated stringencies. Hybridizations with oligonucleotides were performed on cosmid DNA fragments or total RNA that had been electrophoresed on agarose gels and transferred to nitrocellulose or nylon membranes by standard procedures (22, 23). The conditions of hybridization and washes using the 32P-labeled oligonucleotide probes (19-mers) were chosen to optimize the discrimination between perfect hybrids and hybrids with a single mismatch (unpublished results). The oligodeoxynucleotide probes correspond to a highly polymorphic region of the first domain of the HLA-DR β -chain loci and are as follows: I, CTCAGA-CGTAGAGTACTCC; III, CTCAGACTTACGCAGCTCC. In this region there is less than 50% homology with DP or DQ sequences.

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Abbreviation: kb, kilobase(s).

RESULTS

Mapping of Cosmids Containing DR β -Chain Genes. A cosmid library was constructed with DNA from the consanguineous homozygous B-cell line AVL (DR3,3). The library was screened twice, first with a fragment corresponding to the first domain and adjacent sequences of an HLA-DR β -chain gene, and then with a probe containing the second domain and flanking sequences of a DR β -chain gene. Several cosmids were isolated after two rounds of screening. A third round was performed using 3' untranslated region probes specific for the three subregions DP, DO, and DR. Twelve cosmids hybridizing to the 3' DR β -chain probe were mapped, and the restriction fragments corresponding to the signal sequence, first domain, second domain, and 3' untranslated region of the $DR \beta$ molecule were identified by Southern blot hybridization with specific probes.

These twelve clones define a contiguous stretch of about 100 kb of DNA, containing three $DR \beta$ -chain genes, which we call βI , βII , and βIII in the order of their transcription. The molecular map of the $DR \beta$ region is shown in Fig. 1. As can be seen, the three genes are arranged in a head-to-tail orientation. The spacing between βI and βII is about 11 kb. and between BII and BIII, about 24 kb. A large intron (about 8 kb) separates the signal sequence from the first domain

exons in BI and BIII.

The restriction map of the DR BI gene is quite different from that of the DR βII gene. However, there is extensive restriction site homology between the DR BI and DR BIII genes as well as the region downstream from each of these genes (indicated in Fig. 1 by boxes). This suggests a relatively recent duplication event involving at least 25 kb of DNA. An additional region of hybridization to a signal sequence probe has been found 10 kb downstream from the DR BIII gene (at map position 91 kb in Fig. 1).

Southern blot analysis of cellular DNA as well as cosmids containing the βI , βII , and βIII genes was performed to establish that the clones indeed represent genes found in the B-cell DNA and to determine the completeness of the library

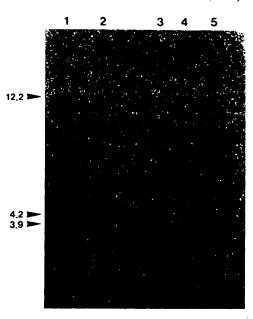


Fig. 2. Southern blot analysis of cosmids and of cellular DNA digested with BamHI and hybridized with a fragment containing the second domain and adjacent sequences of a $DR \beta$ chain gene. Lane: 1 and 2, cellular DNA (AVL); lane 1 is a longer exposure. Lanes 3-5 recombinant cosmids 4-1 (DR βI), 6-2 (DR βII), and 10-4 (DR βIII) respectively (see Fig. 1). Faint bands in lane 3 result from partia digestion of the cosmid. Fragment sizes are indicated in kb.

(Fig. 2). Digestion with BamHI and hybridization with a second domain probe revealed only three bands in cellular DNA (lanes 1 and 2), each band corresponding to one of the three cloned genes (lanes 3-5).

BII Is a Truncated DR Gene. In the course of the restriction mapping, it was observed that the DR BII gene did no: hybridize to probes specific for the first domain of the DR ! chain. This gene was explored in more detail. DNA do

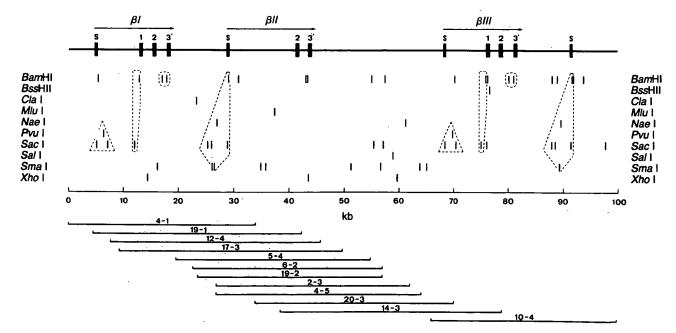


Fig. 1. Molecular map of the $DR \beta$ region. The location of exons, as described from higher-resolution maps of clones or subclones, is shown by filled boxes. S, signal sequence; 1, first domain; 2, second domain; 3', 3' untranslated region. The exons for the transmembrane region and the cytoplasmic tail are not indicated. Arrows above the map indicate the 5'-3' orientation of the genes. Positions of restriction sites are shown by vertical bars. No site for Nru I has been found in any of the cosmids. The fragments cloned in individual cosmids are indicated by horizontal bars with their respective isolation number. Repetitive patterns in the restriction map are indicated by boxes of different shapes (broken lines) The three $DR \beta$ loci are numbered I to III following the direction of transcription.

d n il hybridizations were performed with various probes (Fig. 3). A series of 3' untranslated region probes, known to be specific for each of the subregions DP, DQ, and DR, was used first to show that βII is really a DR gene (Fig. 3A). Indeed, the βII gene hybridizes to the DR 3' probe and not to the DP or DQ probes. Fig. 3B shows the results with a probe for the second domain (cDNA) and a probe encoding the second domain plus flanking sequences (genomic). As can be seen, the DR BII gene hybridizes to these sequences. However, when a probe containing the first domain and flanking sequences was used no hybridization was observed with the BII gene, even at low stringencies (Fig. 3C). When a Southern blot of cosmid 6-2 (β II) was hybridized at low stringency with a cDNA probe specific for the signal sequence and the first domain, a probe that gives two bands with the genes βI and BIII, only the band corresponding to the signal sequence was seen (Fig. 3C).

 βI and βIII Are Transcribed. The transcription of the two complete DR β -chain genes (βI and βIII) was studied by RNA blotting using oligonucleotide probes. Specific oligonucleo-

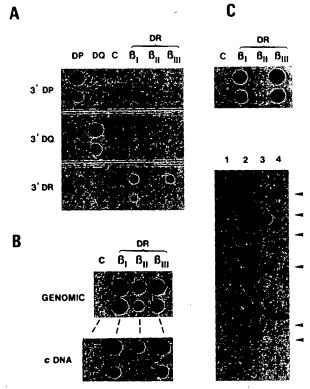


Fig. 3. Dot hybridizations of recombinant clones with various probes. (A) Subregion specificity. DNA of the cosmids 4-1 (DR BI), 6-2 (DR βII), and 10-4 (DR βIII) was used. DQ is a phage containing a $DQ \beta$ -chain gene (10). DP is a cosmid containing a $DP \beta$ -chain gene (3). C is the vector pTCF control. The probes all represented the 3' untranslated portion of cDNA clones encoding DP (3), DQ, and DR (14) β chains. The final wash in each case was $0.5 \times \text{NaCl/Cit}$ for the upper row, 0.1× NaCl/Cit for the lower. (B) Hybridizations with a DR \(\beta\)-chain second-domain (cDNA) probe (14) and a second domain plus flanking region probe (genomic). Identification and stringencies as in A. (C) Hybridizations with DR β first-domain probes. Dot hybridization is with a fragment containing the first domain plus flanking region of a DR β -chain gene. The final wash was $2\times$ NaCl/Cit for the upper row, 0.1× NaCl/Cit for the lower. The Southern blot shows cosmid 6-2 (DR BII) hybridized with a Pst I fragment from a cDNA (14) containing the signal sequence and the first domain of the DR β molecule. Digestions were as follows: lane 1, Mlu I + BamHI; lane 2, Mlu I + Xho I; lane 3, Sma I + Mlu I; lane 4, Sma I + BamHI. The final wash was 2× NaCl/Cit. The arrowheads denote the migration of phage λ DNA digested with HindIII.

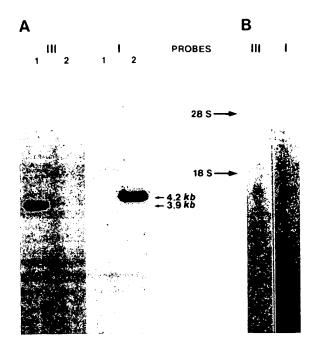


FIG. 4. Hybridizations with oligonucleotides. (A) Southern blot analysis of cosmids 10-4 ($DR \beta III$, lanes 1) and 4-1 ($DR \beta I$, lanes 2). One microgram of cosmid digested with BamHI was loaded in each case. Oligonucleotide III is specific for $DR \beta III$, oligonucleotide I, for $DR \beta I$. (B) Blots of total AVL RNA (20 μ g) hybridized with the specific oligonucleotides I and III. Migration positions of rRNAs are indicated.

tides (19-mers; see Materials and Methods) against a polymorphic region in the first domain of βI and βIII were used under conditions in which only perfectly matched sequences are stable. Fig. 4A shows the βI and βIII specificities of the two probes as shown by Southern blotting of cosmids containing βI or βIII genes. It is evident that each probe is specific for a given gene. The same specificity has been observed with cellular DNA (AVL) analyzed by Southern blotting, in which each probe hybridizes to only one band corresponding to βI or βIII , respectively (unpublished data).

Blots of total RNA from the AVL line, hybridized with the two oligonucleotide probes, reveal in both cases a band of the size of DR β -chain mRNAs (Fig. 4B; refs. 13 and 23). DR βI and βIII are therefore both transcribed.

Comparison of HLA-DR β -Chain Genes from Different Haplotypes. Genomic libraries have also been constructed with DNA from two other B-cell lines, HHK (DRw6,w6) and a heterozygous DR4,w6 cell. Several $DR\beta$ -chain genes were isolated from these libraries. By Southern blot hybridization it is possible to assign a clone isolated from a heterozygous cell line to a given haplotype (21). The restriction maps of the clones containing DRw6 genes were compared to those of the DR3 genes shown in Fig. 1. Extensive homology was found, allowing an alignment of the $DR\beta$ -chain genes of these three haplotypes (Fig. 5). The overall organization of the $DR\beta$ -chain gene cluster is therefore very similar in these DR3 and DRw6 haplotypes.

DISCUSSION

The highly polymorphic HLA-DR β -chain genes play an essential role in the immune response. Analysis of cDNA clones (13, 14) and genomic clones (10), as well as studies of cellular DNA by Southern blotting (15), had allowed us to establish the existence of multiple DR β -chain loci. The study of the function of these genes in antigen presentation and the understanding of the molecular basis of their polymorphism requires the determination of the number of loci, of their

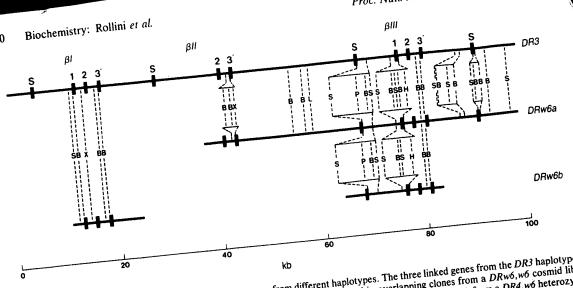


Fig. 5. Restriction site homology between DR β-chain genes from different haplotypes. The three linked genes from a DP w such as a project of a pro THE D. Restriction site nomology between DR β -chain genes from different naplotypes. The three linked genes from the DRS naplotype are depicted as in Fig. 1 (DRS). About 60 kb of the DR β region have been characterized in overlapping clones from a DRM M hatercayeous (DRM). The DR R chain sense have been isolated in overlapping phases from a library made with DNA from a DRM M hatercayeous uepicted as in Fig. 1 (DK3). About 00 K0 of the DK β region have been characterized in overlapping clones from a DR4, w6 heterozygous (DRw6a; ref. 3). Two DR β -chain genes have been isolated in overlapping phages from a library made with DNA from a DR4, w6 heterozygous line (10). These two sees have been shown to be of the DB/M hardotters by Southern blotting (DB/MA). Genes are aligned by homologically the set of the DB/M hardotters by Southern blotting (DB/MA). UNWOR; rel. 3). I wo DK B-chain genes have been isolated in overlapping phages from a horary made with DNA from a DK4, wo neuerozygous cell line (10). These two genes have been shown to be of the DRw6 haplotype by Southern blotting (DRw6b). Genes are aligned by a horary related genes is indicated by a horary related genes is indicated by a horary related genes is indicated by a horary related genes in two related genes is indicated by a horary related genes in the related genes genes genes genes generally ge cell line (10). These two genes have been shown to be of the DKwo naplotype by Southern blotting (DKwob). Genes are aligned by nomology of restriction sites. In some areas the map has been enlarged 4-fold for clarity. An identical site in two related genes is indicated by a broken line. The code for restriction anything is as follows: B. Parilli, H. Parilli, I. Calli, D. Dilli, D. Calli, D. Ca of restriction sites. In some areas the map has been emarged 4-1010 for clarity. An identical site in two related genes is if line. The code for restriction enzymes is as follows: B, BamHI; H, BssHII; L, Sal I; P, Pvu I; S, Sac I; and X, Xho I.

organization, and of their structure within a single haplotype. This paper presents the linkage map of three HLA-DR β-chain genes in the DR3 haplotype.

Overlapping cosmid clones have allowed us to define a contiguous stretch of 100 kb of DNA in the HLA-DR B region. Three DR β -chain genes, arranged in a head-to-tail orientation, have been characterized. We suggest that they should be called DR βI , DR βII , and DR βIII , the roman numerals assigned in the order of transcription. The spacing between these genes is 11 and 24 kb. The middle gene, βII , has a restriction map which differs from that of DR βI or DR βIII . Hybridization studies confirm this observation and also show that this gene does not hybridize to DR β chain probes specific for the first domain exon and adjacent intron sequences (Fig. 3). One can postulate the existence of another exon whose sequence is so different that it no longer hybridizes to any human DR β first domain probe, even at low stringency. An alternative interpretation is that the DR BII gene has lost its first domain and adjacent sequences after a deletion event. In either case, the DR βII gene is not expected to code for a normal DR β chain, and it can thus be considered as a DR β pseudogene.

Two of the DR β -chain genes (βI and βIII) are transcribed. This correlates with our previous cDNA cloning results (14, 24), in which two DRw6 and two DR4 cDNA clones were found. The presence of only two active loci might be of significance with respect to the load imposed on the T-cell repertoire. It is not known yet whether $DR \beta II$ is transcribed. However, it is interesting to note that so far there have been no reports of $DR \beta$ cDNA clones that are truncated or contain

A closer look at the map of the $DR \beta$ cluster reveals blocks an unrelated first domain. of restriction site homology (see boxes in Fig. 1). The arrangement of these homologous regions, even in the noncoding regions, suggests a recent event resulting in the duplication of a portion of the $DR \beta$ gene. This event involved at least 25 kb of DNA and included an entire gene and downstream sequences, including the following signal sequence. Alternatively, a large-scale homogenization (by recent gene conversion) of previously duplicated genes could

explain these two regions of homology. The presence of a fourth signal sequence, found at the 3' end of the cluster, is interesting. It could indicate the

presence of a fourth gene, which would be the homologue of βII . We do not think this is likely in this particular haplotype because the Southern blot of the cell line reveals no fragments other than those of the cloned genes.

We suggest that the DR β -chain gene cluster has had a complicated history of duplications, deletions, and conversions. For example, the duplication of the entire βI and βII gene segment would result in four DR β chain loci, which could in some cases undergo further deletions involving one or another of the DR β loci. In other cases, instead of a recent duplication, extensive deletions might result in a single DR β-chain gene. In that respect, analysis of homozygous DR1,1 cell lines, both by Southern blot (15) and genomic cloning (unpublished data), suggests that there are fewer DR β genes in DR1. This would make it likely that the number of DR β -chain genes might vary from one to four in different haplotypes. In addition, some of these genes might be pseudogenes and not result in a functional DR β -chain

It should be noted that the results presented here argue in favor of the hypothesis that the original number of DR β -chain genes was two (βI and βII). There are two mouse I-E β -chain genes (25, 26), the mouse equivalent of DR, which are also in head-to-tail orientations. Taken together, this suggests that the pair of β chains of this subregion of the major histocompatibility complex has existed before man-mouse

Several clones containing $DR \beta$ chain genes were isolated from two other genomic libraries generated from a homozydivergence. gous DRw6, w6 cell line and a heterozygous DR4, w6 cell line. All DRw6 β chain genes were mapped and aligned with the cloned DR3 genes (Fig. 5). It is clear that the overall organization of the region is the same in these three haplotypes. An interesting point to note is that the supertypic specificity called MT2 (27) includes DR3 and w6, as well as DR5, w8. By comparison, the restriction map of a $DR\beta$ pseudogene isolated from a DR4 (non-MT2) homozygous cell line (28) is completely different from the map of any of the DR3 or w6 genes. This homology, at the level of restriction mapping of cloned genes, between haplotypes within a supertypic group reinforces the results of Southern blotting analysis, in which many identical bands are seen in DNAs of the same supertypic group. These results indicate that the ue of type tents

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1 the erall hree ypic as β cell as β cell as β cell as g cell a haplotypes within a supertypic group are evolutionarily related. This comparison also shows that, at least for genes of the same supertypic group, allelic sequence comparisons can be made by relating the map of a given gene to a given locus identified on the DR β linkage map (Fig. 5). This is an important point in the study of DR β chain polymorphism, as until now sequence comparisons have been made without the possibility of distinguishing between alleles or pseudoalleles.

Finally, the availability of these genes now allows the study of the expression of individual DR genes after DNA-mediated cell transformation (29). This should result in a correlation between the individual DR β -chain loci and the structure or functional specificities of their products, as measured by serological reactivities or specific interaction with T lymphocytes. Indeed, expression of the DR β III locus from the DR3, DRw6a, and DRw6b haplotypes (Fig. 5) in mouse L cells has allowed the identification of that locus as encoding the MT2 (w52) serological specificity (ref. 21 and unpublished results).

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